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AUTHOR Couse, Leslie J.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the portrayal of the elderly within African American, Latino, and Native American cultures in picture books for children ages 3 to 8 years. Thirty books were selected from libraries and book stores and examined using guidelines from three sources: (1) "Ageism in Literature Analysis," a 15-item rating scale; (2) "Stereotypes Worksheet" from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Anti-Bias Curriculum; and (3) "Ten Items for Analyzing Children's Books for Sexism and Racism." The results indicated that the Ageism scores from the "Ageism in Literature Analysis" form ranged from 1.93 to 3.0 (fair to good). The NAEYC "Stereotype Worksheet" and the "Ten Items" form resulted in few biases found in the children's books. An annotated bibliography notes biases, positive portrayals, and the ageism score for each book. The screening process used by the reviewer and the need to update the NAEYC worksheet could have influenced the results. The need for more children's literature containing cultural role models for older Native and Hispanic Americans is discussed, for example the particular lack of materials depicting contemporary Native Americans. Difficulties in using the forms for picture books are discussed. (Includes the forms used to evaluate the books. Contains 9 references.) (KB)

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ED 421 210

Read with Me:
The Use of Cultural Role Models in Children's Literature

Presented by

Leslie J. Couse, M.S.Ed., M.S.P.A

Doctoral Student and Teaching Assistant
Department of Child & Family Studies
Syracuse University

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Literature Review

The Children's Literacy Initiative reports that 55% of all urban children and 33% of all children entering kindergarten are labeled 'at-risk educationally'. These 'at-risk' children are remedial the day they enter first grade, and it is difficult for them to undo this label. African American, Latino and Native American children have lower rates of educational attainment than whites (Children's Defense Fund, 1996) and therefore, maybe at higher risk. One possible way to minimize the risk is to expose children to print early in their lives.

Children who are read to and exposed to print early in their lives have been found to have greater success in future schooling. Early childhood classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. Consequently, children need props in their classroom that provide positive images of their culture. Children's literature can be a vehicle for positive cultural images. The book selection in the early childhood classroom is a crucial part of the cultural appropriateness of the curriculum. Cultural relevance of the classroom contributes to the continuity between the home and school environment, thereby giving children consistent messages.

Children receive messages from the environment and people around them daily. These messages may include stereotypes or limitations associated with belonging to a racial or ethnic group. Ethnic identity, one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the perceptions and feelings associated with being a part of the group, is separate from personal identity. Both are related and may influence each other (Morrison & Rogers, 1996). Consequently, a child's personal identity is shaped by the experiences s/he has

based upon belonging to an ethnic group. Books support children's development and lead to activities that can improve their social relations and help them achieve independence (Beaty, 1994). The presence of positive role models in children's literature can contribute to a child's ethnic identity. One such role model may be the elderly.

The elderly in American society are regarded as having little worth. A study of classic children's literature (Ansello, 1977) found that the negative aspects of aging were prevalent in the way elderly characters were portrayed. Terms like old, sad and poor were used to describe these characters. Preschool children have been found to exhibit negative attitudes and use ageist language to describe the elderly (Dallman & Power, 1997; McGuire, 1993).

However, the elderly within the African, Latino, and Native American cultures are regarded as a resource to the young and are seen as having knowledge. They are valued within the culture (Strong & DeVault, 1995).

Children's literature is a powerful tool for shaping children's understanding of the world around them. The provision of quality children's literature, with the elderly as positive role models in the African American, Latino, and Native American cultures, is a means of enhancing the early childhood curriculum to improve literacy for all young children.

Method

Picture books for children ages 3-8 years were selected from local libraries and book stores. A children's literature review examining the depiction's of the role of the elderly within African American, Latino and Native American cultures was conducted. Three tools were used to analyze each book. The first was the *Ageism in Literature Analysis*

form (Dodson & Hause, 1981). Each book was reviewed employing the form. The fifteen items were tallied and averaged yielding an Ageism Score **(A)**.

The second tool, the NAEYC Anti-Bias Curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989) *Stereotypes Worksheet*, listing common stereotypes of African-American, Latino, and Native American males and females was administered. The final tool *Ten Items for Analyzing Children's Books for Sexism and Racism* was used to review each book for stereotypes.

Results

Each book was carefully read and then reviewed with the *Ageism in Literature Analysis Form*. Each of the items were scored on the following scale: *1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good.* Scores were totaled to reach a composite total score. Not all fifteen items were able to be scored, as per the instructions, due to the limited nature of picture books. Some of the items were not found to be relative to children's picture books. Typically item #6 and #7, dealing with occupation were not addressed in the story line. Some scores are not reflective of fifteen items therefore, an average score was developed based upon the actual point total divided by the number of items scored. An average Ageism Score **(A)** is listed in the annotated bibliography. The Ageism scores ranged from *fair to good* (1.93-3.0). The results of this review follow in the form of an annotated bibliography of children's literature.

The review using the *Stereotypes Worksheet* from the NAEYC Anti-Bias Curriculum and The *Ten Items for Analyzing Children's Books for Sexism and Racism* resulted in few biases found. Biases are noted in the annotated bibliography. Positive portrayals were typically found and are so noted.

Ageism in Literature Analysis Form

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____ Copyright: _____

Grade Level: _____

Circle the number you feel is appropriate for each item. It is not necessary to answer all items. 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good.

1. The older character plays a vital role in the story.	1	2	3
2. The older character's personality is fully developed.	1	2	3
3. The older character is self-reliant as opposed to being dependent.	1	2	3
4. The older character's physical appearance is fully described.	1	2	3
5. Stereotypic adjectives such as old, sad, and poor are not frequently or exclusively use in this book to refer to older people.	1	2	3
6. The older character's occupation is fully defined.	1	2	3
7. The older character's occupation is a meaningful one.	1	2	3
8. If not employed, the older character is engaged in worthwhile activities.	1	2	3
9. The older character is not engaged in stereotypic roles of his/her ethnic or racial group.	1	2	3
10. The older character is from outside the family unit.	1	2	3
11. The older person is a three dimensional character.	1	2	3
12. If illustrated, the illustrations are appropriate for the time and setting of the story.	1	2	3
13. If illustrated, the older character is illustrated in social communication with a variety of age groups.	1	2	3
14. If illustrated, all characters are pictured realistically.	1	2	3
15. Overall analysis of the book, in terms of portrayal of elderly persons.	1	2	3

Comments: Tally:

Name of Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

Anita E. Dodson & Judith B. Hause. *Ageism in Literature*: An analysis Kit for Teachers and Librarians. (1981). Teaching and Learning About Aging Project. Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, Acton, MA.

Stereotypes Worksheet

Stereotypes of Afro-Americans

Male Stereotypes	Female Stereotypes
Shuffling, eye-rolling, fearful, superstitious comic	Big-bosomed "mammy," loyal to whites
Gentle, self-sacrificing older man	Big, bossy mother or maid-commander
of Athletic super-jock	the household
Smooth talking con man	Sexy temptress
Super-stud	Stupid, but sweet, little girl
Stupid but comical, little boy	Tragic mulatto
Rough, dangerous criminal	
Loudly-dressed, happy-go-lucky buffoon	
Exotic primitive	

Stereotypes of Latinos

Male Stereotypes	Female Stereotypes
Sombrero-wearing, serape-clad, sandaled man or boy	Hard working, poor submissive,
Taking a siesta near a cactus or an overburdened burro	self-sacrificing religious mother
Ignorant, cheerful, lazy peon	of many
Sneaky, knife wielding, mustached bandit	Sweet, small, shy, gentle girl
Humble, big-eyed, poor-but-honest boy	Sexy, loud fiery woman (who often
Teenage gang member	prefers a white man to Latino men)
Macho boaster and supreme-commander of household	Undereducated, submissive, nice girl
	with marriage as a life goal

Occupational Stereotypes

Impoverished migrant workers (most Latinos actually live in cities)
Unemployed barrio dwellers

Stereotypes of Native Americans

Male Stereotypes	Female Stereotypes
Savage, bloodthirsty "native"	Heavyset, workhorse "squaw"
Stoic, loyal follower	"Indian princess" (depicted with
Drunken, mean thief	European features and often in
Drunken comic	love with a white man for whom
Hunter, tracker	she is willing to sacrifice her
Noble, child of nature	life)
Wise old chief	
Evil medicine man	
Brave boy, endowed by nature with special "Indian" qualities	

Occupational Stereotypes

Hunters	Unemployed loafers
Cattle thieves	Craftspeople
Warriors	

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children. © 1989 by National Association for the Education of Young Children, pp. 143-145.

Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Sexism and Racism

1. **Check the Illustrations**

   a. **Look for Stereotypes**. A stereo type is an over simplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications.

   b. **Look for Tokenism**. If there are minority characters in the illustrations, do they look just like whites except for being tinted or colored in? Do they all look alike, or are they depicted as genuine individuals with distinctive features?

2. **Check the Story Line**

   a. **Standard for Success**. Does it take "white" behavior standard for a minority person to "get ahead"? Is "making it" in the dominant white society projected as the only ideal? In friendships between white and third world children, is it the third world child who does most of the understanding and forgiving?

   b. **Resolution of Problems**. How are problems presented, conceived, and resolved in the story? Are minority children considered to be "the problem"?

   c. **Role of Women**. Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their good looks or their relationship with the boys? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

3. **Look at Lifestyles. Are third world persons and their setting depicted in** such a way that they contrast unfavorably with the unstated norm of white, middle-class suburbia? If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they go beyond over-simplifications and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle?

4. **Weigh the Relationships Between People**. Do whites in the story possess the power, take the leadership, and make the important decisions? Do minorities and females function in supporting, subservient roles?

5. **Note the Heroes.** For many years, books showed only "safe" minority heroes– those who avoided serious conflict with the white establishment of their time. Ask the question: "Whose interest is a particular hero really serving? The interests of the hero's own people? Or the interests of white people?

6. **Consider the Effects on a Child's Self-Image**. Are norms established which limit any child's aspirations and self-concepts? What effect can it have on minority children to be continuously bombarded with images of the color white as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue, etc., and the color black as evil, dirty, menacing, etc.? Are males performing all of the brave and important deeds?

7. **Consider the Author's or Illustrator's Background**. Analyze the biographical material on the jacket or back of the book. What qualifies the author to deal with this theme?

8. **Check the Author's Perspective**. No author can be entirely objective. All authors write from a cultural as well as from a personal context. Does the direction of the author's perspective substantially weaken or strengthen the value of his/her written work.

9. **Watch for Loaded Words.** A word is leaded when it has offensive overtones. Examples: savage, primitive, conniving, lazy, superstitious, treacherous, wily, crafty, inscrutable, docile, and backward. Look for sexist language. Examples: generic use of he/him/man.

10. **Look at the Copyright Date**. Books on minority themes – usually hastily conceived – suddenly began appearing in the mid and late 1960's. They were followed by a growing number of "minority experience" books to meet the new demand, but these books were still written by white authors. They reflect a white point of view.

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children. © 1989 by National Association for the Education of Young Children, pp. 143-145.

Annotated Bibliography

Native American Stories

Bruchac, J. (1994). A boy called Slow. New York: Philomel Books.

A boy of the Hunkpapa band of Lakota Sioux was given the childhood name, Slow. His actions were slow and measured. His father, Returns Again, was a great warrior, as were his fathers before him. Slow had to prove himself to earn an adult name. He finally had a chance to ride in battle against the Crow, where he earned the name, Sitting Bull. The voices of the forefathers sent his name through his father. **A = 2.6**

Brother eagle, sister sky: A message from Chief Seattle. (1991). New York: Dial books.

Based upon a message of Chief Seattle, one of the most respected Chiefs of the Northwest Nations, given at a ceremony to sign papers for the government to buy Indian lands. Parents, grandparents and ancestors have passed on to their children the belief that the land and all the creatures that inhabit it are sacred. The Earth does not belong to the Indians, they belong to the Earth. Seattle challenges us to love and take care of the Earth as they have and pass that tradition on to our children. Detailed pen and ink drawings of Susan Jeffers add deeper meaning to the story. Jeffers consults with Native Americans about her work and has illustrated numerous books about them. **A = 2.77**

Erdrich, H. E. (1993). Maria Tallchief. Autin, TX: Steck-Vaughn.

Maria Tallchief came from the American Indian tribe called, Osage. Her father was full-blood Osage and her mother was white. Her Osage grandmother lived with her and taught her the Osage ways. She was very proud of her native ancestry. Maria loved to dance. She and her sister, Marjorie, became famous ballet dancers. The Osage honored her in a special ceremony. They gave her an honor name, selected by her Grandmother, Wa-Xthe-Thonba, which means Woman of Two Standards or of Two Worlds. This story provides a very positive contemporary role model for children. The grandmother plays a vital role in transmitting culture and values to Maria. This story is par of a series documenting the lives of Native Americans who have made important contributions. **A = 2.88**

Goble, P. (1990). Iktomi Stories (see titles below). New York: Orchard Books.

Iktomi is a native elder. He is known as a trickster and is enjoyed by both children and adults. His stories are used to teach Native ways. He is always choosing the wrong things and getting into trouble. Amusing subtitles enhance the story and help teach the underlying meaning. Illustrations add contemporary humor. Goble lives in Utah and has studied native Americans for many years.

Iktomi and the ducks

Iktomi sets out to find his horse dressed in his best clothes. He becomes hungry, so he tricks some ducks and roasts them. His foolishness gets him stuck and he looses the duck dinner to a fox. **A = 2.20**

Iktomi and the big rock

Iktomi dresses lavishly to set out for a parade. The hot sun forces him to take off his blanket and give it to the boulder. Later it becomes cold and starts to rain. Iktomi takes back his blanket for shelter. The boulder chases him. Because of his foolishness, his beautiful clothes are ruined. **A = 2.2**

Iktomi and the berries.

Iktomi sets out to hunt prairie dogs to prepare a feast for his people so they will think he is generous. He becomes hungry and spies some berries at the bottom of the lake. He is unable to stay down long enough to gather them so he ties a boulder to his neck. He finds no berries and almost drowns. Lying on the side of the lake he looks up to see the berries hanging on the tree above him. He is so angry, he beats the berries into the water and the ducks eat them. **A=2.2**

Goble, P. (1993). Beyond the ridge. New York: Aladdin Books.

A story from the Plains Indian people about death. A grandmother is called 'beyond the ridge' by her mother to join her ancestors in the spirit world. The grandmother is very concerned for her children and grandchildren she has left behind because they are so sad. She wants them to know she is alright. This story illustrates the caring between generations that is transmitted through story telling. **A = 2.64**

Hirschi, R. (1992). Seya's song. Seattle: Sasquatch Books.

A contemporary child's story of nature and life in the Northwest for the S'Kalallam people. The story is told from the memory of a time when Grandmother and Grandfather were young and S'Klallam words were always around. S'Klallam words are used to in the text to describe the season's of the year. Watercolor illustrations enhance the almost poetic story. **A = 2.66**

Lewis, P. O. (1997). Frog girl. Hillsboro, Oregon: Beyond Words Pub., Inc.

Based upon mythic traditions of the Haida, Tlingit, and other native peoples of the Pacific Northwest. An Indian girl is summoned to the world beneath the lake when all the frogs disappear. She is questioned by "Grandmother" about the disappearance of her children. The Grandmother is portrayed as having wisdom and oversight of the children. **A = 2.23**

Longfellow, H. W. (1983). Hiawatha. New York: Puffin Pied Piper Books.

This picture book concentrates on the boyhood of Hiawatha. Taken from the famous poem, "The Song of Hiawatha". Hiawatha is nursed by his grandmother, Nokomis, the daughter of the moon. She taught him the lessons of life about his forefathers and a love of animals. Susan Jeffers detailed illustrations bring the story to life. Jeffers consults with Native Americans about her work and has illustrated numerous books about them. **A = 2.66**

McDermott, G. (1974). Arrow to the sun. New York; The Viking Press.

An adaptation of a Pueblo Indian tale. A young boy sets out to find his father on the 'Trail of Life'. The wise arrow maker made the boy into an arrow and sent him to the sun. The boy passed the trials set before him to prove his father was the sun. He returned to Earth to bring his father's spirit to the 'World of Men'. This illustrates the belief of Father Sun and Mother Earth that give life to the Pueblo people. McDermott has worked on several books and films exploring folklore and mythology. **A = 2.21**

Yolen, J. (1990). Sky dogs. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Pub.

The author uses several legends of the coming of horses to the Blackfeet people to create the story, Sky Dogs. An old man tells how he came to be called, "He-who-loves-horses". As a motherless child of the Piegan, a band of the Blackfeet people, a small boy watches large animals, the chief calls 'Sky Dogs', bring sick Kutani people into camp. He learns to care for the horses from his new Kutani mother. The coming of horses changed the lives of the great Piegan people, who became known as the people of many horses. They became the masters of the plains. The old man is depicted as having knowledge that he passes on to those younger. His wisdom has value to help his people make horses an important part of life. Yolen has published over a hundred books and has won several awards.**A = 2.71**

Latino American Stories

Bunting, E. (1994). A day's work. New York: Clarion Books.

A story of the challenges faced by Mexican immigrant families and their supportive extended family network. Francisco, a young Mexican-American boy, helps his Spanish speaking Grandfather (Abuelo), find work as a gardener. They work together pulling weeds only to discover, Francisco's lie that they were experienced gardeners did not pay off. Abuelo teaches Francisco an important lesson about honesty and hard work which results in steady work for them. Vivid watercolor illustrations enhance the story line. This story dispels common Latino stereotypes with the message of honesty, hard work and generational interdependence. **A = 2.85**

Castaneda, O. (1993). Abuela's weave. New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc.

Young Esperanza weaves beside Abuela (grandmother) tirelessly. They are preparing to sell their wares at a special festival. Abuela has a birthmark on her face that scares people off. Therefore, Esperanza must sell the weavings on her own. Abuela stays near to watch over her. Together they help each other. Colorful acrylic illustrations enhance the story line. Castaneda writings focus on his birthplace, Guatemala. **A = 2.71**

Hurwitz, J. (1993). New shoes for Silvia. New York: Morrow Junior Books

A package from America brings new red shoes for Silvia, who lives in another America. Grandma says they are as red

as a watermelon, but they are too big! Silvia uses her imagination to play with her shoes till she is big enough to proudly wear them. The passage of time is depicted through Silvia's mother's pregnancy. Grandma is depicted as a supportive extended family member who lives with them. Story provides a vehicle for discussion about family that may live far away. Watercolor illustrations enhance the story line. Hurwitz is an award winning author for several children's books and has worked as a children's librarian for several years in New York City. **A = 1.93**

James, B. (1990). <u>The dream stair</u>. New York: Harper Row, Pub.

A young girl is comforted to sleep by these words of her Grandmother, "This candle keeps you safe in the dark, safe in my heart. Go up the stair, go down the stair, and tell me about it in the morning." She climbs the stairs to the attic in her dreams to play with angels and then descends to play in the dark warm basement till morning. The grandmother is portrayed as transmitting security and coping skills by a tradition of being ever present through the candle. She is available and ready to listen when her granddaughter awakes. The story teaches self-reliance. The author graduated from the University of Utah and has published four books. The illustrations reflect a rich southwestern heritage. **A = 2.25**

Jones, R. (1995). <u>Great Aunt Martha</u>. New York: Dutton Children's Books.

A young girl is not excited that her Great Aunt Martha is coming to visit. She must be quiet so Great Aunt Martha can get her rest, until Great Aunt Martha says, "It's too quiet, let's have some fun!" The story relates changes in family routine that may be unsettling for children, when relatives come to visit. Dispels the stereotype of the elderly being boring; it depicts older relatives as being fun. Colorful illustrations successfully depict anticipation, frustration, boredom, and joy of the family. Jones is the author of several children's books. **A = 2.6**

Mora, P. (1992). <u>A birthday basket for Tia</u>. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.

Cecilia excitedly prepares for Great Aunt Tia's 90th birthday. What can she give her? She thinks of all the special things she does with Great Aunt Tia and puts together a special gift for her. This story highlights the special relationship between a child and an older person. Mora, the author, grew up in El Paso, Texas. She draws on her childhood experiences in the Mexican-American Community. **A = 2.64**

Schertle, A. (1989). <u>William and Grandpa</u>. New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Books.

William discovers at his annual summer visit with Grandpa that he knows the same song William learned at school. They also share shadow jumping, star gazing and hot chocolate as William learns he will be as big as Grandpa someday and share these things with his grandchildren. The Grandfather is portrayed as sensitive, caring, and as having time to play with William. The positive sharing of intergenerational relationships is highlighted. The author was born and still resides in Los Angeles. She holds a Bachelors degree in Education. **A = 2.79**

Williams, V. (1982). A chair for my mother. New York: Green Willow Books.

A young girl, her waitress mother, and grandmother live and work together to save money to buy a comfortable chair to replace the ones that burned in the fire. A story of family resilience, community support, and love. A positive portrayal of a poor single parent/extended family in an urban setting. Williams was born in California and is a graduate of Black Mountain College in North Carolina. **A = 2.77**

African-American Stories

Buckley, H. (1994). Grandfather and I. New York: Lanthrop, Lee & Shepard.

A small boy tells how he loves to be with his Grandfather because he never hurries. This predictable book highlights the gift of time that the elderly give to children. This book provides a positive role model for African American males. Buckley is a graduate of Syracuse and Columbia Universities. She teaches writing for children at Syracuse University. **A = 2.79**

DeFelice, C. (1997). Willy's silly Grandma. New York: Orchard Books.

Willy thinks his superstitious Grandma is silly until he becomes scared and she is there to comfort him. Validates the knowledge of less schooled elders whose primary source of knowledge is what is passed on through the generations. Deals with magic and superstition found in some rural culture. Abstract illustrations lend to the feeling of being a part of Willy's imagination. **A = 2**

English, K. (1996). Big wind coming. Morton Grove, Ill: Albert Whitman & Co.

Sarah Ann lives with her grandparents, parents, and brother on a farm. The family works together to prepare for a big hurricane. Grandma reminds them that God controls the storm, all they can do is get ready. Grandma and Grandpa will plant new pecan and peach trees as they start to rebuild. Depicts an extended family living together in a rural coastal setting. **A = 2.79**

Flournoy, V. (1995). Tanya's reunion. New York: Dial Books for Young Children.

Tanya travels with her Grandmother back to the family homestead to get ready for a family reunion. She learns of her Grandmother's life and family history in Virginia, as the family gathers heirlooms from slavery and share cropping to tell the family history. Grandma provides reassurance to Tanya in an unfamiliar house. Vivid watercolors artfully depict the story. This book is based on the author's memory of her first visit to a relative's farm. Flournoy has written several award winning children's books. **A = 2.93**

Howard, E. F. (1991). Aunt Flossie's hats (and crab cakes later). New York: Clarion Books.

Sarah and Susan love to visit Great Aunt Flossie. Her house is full of wonderful things, especially hatboxes. Aunt Flossie tells them a story that happened long ago with each hat they play with . Aunt Flossie makes local history come alive and passes on family history to the girly. Vivid oil painting illustrations make the story come alive. Howard is a children's librarian. A trip, when her 98 year old aunt lost her best hat, inspired the story. **A = 2.93**

Johnson, A. (1990). When I am old with you. New York: Orchard Books.

A young boy imagines the fun he will have with is Grandfather when he is old with him. They will go fishing, rock on the porch and eat bacon for breakfast; all of their favorite things that they do together now. Vivid watercolor illustrations depict the grandfather in a mentoring relationship with the young boy. This book provides a positive role model for African American males. This is the author's third book. **A = 2.57**

Johnson, D. (1991). What kind of baby-sitter is this? New York: Macmillian Pub. Co.

Kevin hates baby-sitters until his Mom leaves him with 'Aunt Lovey Pritchard'. She watches baseball, collects baseball card, and read with Kevin. The story depicts a single parent family with Mother attending school. Vivid pictures enhance the story line. Johnson is a freelance author and illustrator. This is her third book. **A = 2.8**

Kroll, V. (1995). Sweet Magnolia. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Pub.

Denise makes her long awaited visit, to Grandma in the Louisiana bayou. There she helps Grandma, a wildlife rehabilitator, heal and set free a baby bird. Important lessons of life are passed on from Grandmother to Denise. Both the text and the detailed illustrations are rich with references to southern life and Cajun culture. Grandmother provides a positive role model in an uncommon profession. Teaches respect for living things and wonderment about life. **A=3**

Pinkney, G. J. (1994). The Sunday outing. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Ernestine loves to listen to her great Aunt Odessa tell stories about Great Uncle Ariah, the trainman. Together, they love to watch the trains. Ernestine longs to ride a train. Aunt Odessa helps her find a way when kinfolk invite her out of town. A story of how family tradition is passed on and a girl's dream realized through the support of her family. The author draws upon her childhood memories for her books. She collaborates with her husband, the illustrator.

A = 2.43

Discussion

When the "Ten Items for Analyzing Children's Books for Sexism and Racism" was used to review each of the books, positive portrayals were typically found. The reason the books reviewed present positive portrayals could be due to the way they were prescreened by the reviewer. The reviewer looked for the presence of an elder role model along with quality illustrations. The titles selected were predominantly current (within the last ten years), which may indicate an improvement in children's literature away from cultural stereotypes. The *Stereotypes Worksheet* was developed in 1989 and may need to be updated to reflect more current trends and biases. The prescreening along with the currency of the *Stereotypes Worksheet* may contribute to the positive results found.

The *Ageism in Literature Analysis Form* was found to have limitations when applying it to picture books. Due to the limited nature of picture book stories, and the fact that most of the older characters were family members, some of the items were not found to be relative to children's picture books. Another limitation found in applying this tool, is that the tool rates self-reliance as high and dependence as low. Many of the books portray older and younger family members as being interdependent upon each other. Intergenerationally the family members help one another. The elder shares their knowledge and skill while the child or other family members give affection, a sense of purpose, or their skill to the elder. Interdependence is typically viewed as a family strength, yet on this scale it was viewed as a limitation.

Cultural role models were found in children' literature for Latinos, African Americans,

and Native Americans. The availability of this type of literature was most easily found for African-Americans. For the purposes of this review, there was a more than adequate sample. Books were available, but not as easily found, depicting Latino Americans. There were a very limited number of books available depicting Native Americans. Most of those found were legends put into print. The author was unable to find books depicting contemporary Native Americans, in children's literature. The search was conducted through local libraries and bookstores. This represents a serious gap in availability of quality children's literature depicting Native Americans.

Conclusions:

Children's literature varies in both content and quality. A careful review of literature by early childhood professionals is needed to assure an appropriate selection for the classroom. This study provides a beginning.

The author recommends further research be conducted of children's literature depicting Native Americans. This would serve to determine whether the need is to develop quality children's literature depicting Native Americans or whether the lack of availability is due to bias or lack of knowledge of those who supply books in geographic areas such as librarians, teachers and bookstore owners. Or thirdly, whether legends put into print is a culturally appropriate representation of Native Americans and contemporary children's books are not needed.

The development of quality children's literature with cultural role models is recommended for all three cultural groups identified. However, based upon this study, the need is strongest for Native-Americans. It is appropriate to expand the annotated bibliography and make it available to early childhood professionals for enhancing the

curriculum. Children's literature is a powerful tool for shaping children's understanding of the world around them. The provision of quality children's literature, with the elderly as positive role models in the African American, Latino, and Native American cultures, is a means of enhancing the early childhood curriculum to improve literacy for all young children.

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